

**ESMERALDA SUNKO****LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS****Abstract**

Many questions concerning quality of functioning and effectiveness are connected with the management of education as a professional field in educational organizations. The role of educational leadership in an educational organization raises many questions related to legislative regulations of activities, issues of institutional placement, educational partnerships, and learning processes. Tests presented in the paper deal with the processes within two action groups separately, which may be associated with better communication and social outcomes. Quantitatively, the study included 108 participants, taking into account the subjects in the school staff who had previously conducted action research. Examining relationships between the phenomena have attributed characteristics to them. A Hi - quadrate test examined the frequency of the perceived discrepancies: the school researched and the staff chronological age, their qualifications, their area of activity (class, subject teaching, or high school), work experience, and communication training based on NLP techniques.

Respondents were an important factor in explaining trust in leaders (director), but not in the expected problems, expertise, and competencies of the organization's employees and their work. In other words, the less confidence in the leader of the school means less confidence in the entire school system and its operation.

*Key words:* educational leadership and management, NLP, communication

**Introduction**

Every attribute of an analysis system illustrates the specific management and leadership in which the process of decision-making is conducted. Directed rigidity is the consequence of the curriculum rigidity. Rigidity is in direct correlation to the old fashioned but still characteristic concept of education by which the educational process needs to be organized and controlled, it does not come out of this process. The educational regime in Croatia did not succeed in one of its basic tasks, enabling and stimulating users' personal growth (pupils, students, and teachers). In 2001, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – OECD analyzed the situation in Croatian schools and found that the Croatian school system is too centralized in the field of finance and management and in determining and implementing the curriculum. On the other hand, the evaluation of activities is not centralized. Complete decentralization is present in the field of evaluation of work quality ([www.oecd.org/dataoecd/44/53/33691596](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/44/53/33691596)).

It seems that playing an important part in a teaching role is very far from leaders' 'main' function which is leadership as a part of management. The primary function of leaders is to manage and lead the organization (regardless of the level of work, small group, class, parallel class, school, municipal district, a nongovernmental organization, bank, ministry...) towards meeting the goals of the

organization. Leadership differs in the content and purpose of leadership, but also in the way of leadership.

In this context quality can be seen as the need to bring the Croatian Qualification Framework (CQF), to consider the implementation of school programmes for the evaluation of learning outcomes which are linked to labour market needs. Learning outcomes and a unique and powerful system of quality assurance are key elements, which will be based on the development of evaluation and recognition of formal and informal learning within the CQF (<http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?art=9850&sec=3304>). In the process of leadership, it should effectively and responsibly direct the resources and implement authority based on shared values between the authorities and the public, so citizens can call the government to account and thus provide service in their interest (Mužić, 1979; Mijatović, 2002; Jurić, 2004).

Tests presented in this paper stem from the demands of the roles which subject/teachers perform and on the basis of which they will, as participants, be trained to perform the competencies which are essential for successful leadership of the teachers. The framework uses the techniques of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), which have so far been proved useful, successful and in a short time - efficient. The model changes as new applications are investigated. It is wide and its concepts are drawn from modern biology, psychology, learning skills and learning, linguistics, computer science, religions (O'Connor, Prior, 2002; O'Connor, Seymour, 1995.). This paper analyzes the evaluation of professional development activities on the attitudes of teachers and assistants. For this part of the problem, analysis will be directed towards methods of quantitative analysis.

**The research is directed towards redefining the concept of knowledge in knowledge-based competencies, quality leadership, and managing the improvement of communication skills in educational institutions.**

### **Objectives and Tasks**

**The objective of this study is to assess the impact of teaching on the attitudes of the respondents according to leadership experienced in educational institutions.**

Research goals were achieved by realizing the following **tasks**: the emancipation of participants in activities, determining the impact on teachers' teaching, in their views about the system, relationships teacher - parent and teacher - pupil.

### **Respondents**

The study included 108 participants, taking into account that the respondents and staff are employees of two primary schools in different areas of the SD County. Several respondents had previously participated in the qualitative reflexive - action research in a series of modular custom made pedagogical workshops and the second part of the respondents were their colleagues who were not been involved in the reflexive - action part of the research. The respondents in this study consist of two groups of teachers and professional assistants from schools included in the research (after referred to as teachers), participants in qualitative research, who will be

introduced to the techniques of communicating that should be incorporated into practical action in all spheres of life.

In gender configuration 88 women and 20 men were tested, which reflects the actual gender bias in employees in primary schools. Age structure is covered by the categories from 21 to 65 years. Most respondents are of the chronological age of 41-45 years. Older age groups dominate the respondents from 46 years to 60 years. The research covers 46 subjects with a university degree, 58 subjects with a college degree, and 4 subjects with high-school diploma that corresponds to the age of the respondents and the history of legal regulations required for work in primary schools.

The largest group of respondents have many years of experience, more than 31, therefore they are pre-retirement teachers. By looking at the annual records of school covered by the research, it is evident that the staff members of schools that participated in the study were mostly from groups with long years of service 21-30 years and in some cases more than 30.

## Research Methods

Contents of the action – reflexive practicum, in which one part of the respondents previously participated voluntarily, apply to the methods by which leadership achieved in educational institutions.

The hypothesis in this paper refers to the assumption that the attitudes of respondents, who have had some teaching about NLP techniques differ from the attitudes of teachers who have not undergone training in management. The first section consists of 6 questions, which provide answers to the structure of personal variables such as gender, age, education, the frame of work activities, years of work experience and professional development relating to the acquisition of communication skills by using techniques of NLP. The second part is a Likert-type scale consisting of 5 degrees of frequency and 39 claims. The obtained positions are described as completely integrative constructs. The results were processed by SPSS STATISTICA 5 program and SPSS 9.

## Results

The results of this study showed that the attitudes of teachers with less experience differ from those of teachers with greater experience, for example, teachers of older age groups consider more than their younger colleagues that the relationship between parents and teachers significantly affects a child's upbringing and as well as a belief that they have knowledge of all the problems in their classroom.

In order to verify the basic assumptions about the multidimensionality of test cases, the factor analysis (FA) was used, employing the principal component, which extracted three statistical significant factors. Before interpreting the obtained results, the existence of three different factors was assumed. The difference relates to the variables that describe the factors 'independence', 'relations' and 'external control'. From the purified results the factor 'external control' had the most variables correlated with variables that are supposed to describe the system. This means that teachers who were included in this research describe the variables associated with

the education system as 'external control'. Most of the variables, which should describe the teacher - pupil relationships together with other variables, describe the 'independence' factor. The resulting matrix was subjected to an appropriate orthogonal Varimax transformation. Nine variables are highly saturated with the factor 'independence' whereas the same allegations have low and negative values to describe the other two factors. The factor 'independence' describes variables that are – it is easier to work with pupils than with parents, willingness to seek help outside the school and 'avoiding conversations with the headmaster'. Distribution of frequencies of the variables confirms the thesis that relations between teacher - pupil are very highly connected with regard to the 'independence' factor.

Most statements describe the second factor called 'relations'. The line of variables in this factor can be arranged in three levels of importance. The first level describes the relationship teacher - pupil, the second level describes the relation parents - teachers. Gained factors are highly saturated and describe ways of hiding emotions, i.e. minimizing the indication of emotion. The third part of this factor connects with (self-) assessment of teacher competences. This factor includes the description of interpersonal intelligence as the ability to understand other people's motives. The third factor is called the 'external control' of which the most expressed variables describe relationships with parents effecting the core of the problem and emphasize the need for reorganization of meetings with parents and 'dissatisfaction with the cooperation of parents and schools'. Representatives of this factor described it as obedience of students and the centralized welfare final decision making, that is by transferring responsibility to someone else - in this case the headmaster. Highly emphasized are variables with inadequate influence of school to family situations, but also those on the absence or violation of rules and protocols, and the impact on the emotional area of subjects.

### **Results of Hi – quadrate test**

X<sup>2</sup> showed statistically significant deviation of perceived frequency due to the **school** in which research took place in the assertions: (Parents bring innovation in our school). X<sup>2</sup> is 0.018 < 0.05 and (We are a happy school). X<sup>2</sup> is 0.046 < 0.05.

According to the chronological age, X<sup>2</sup> showed statistically significant differences. Teachers of older age groups agree more with the statements – 'The relationship between parents and teachers significantly affects the education of children' and 'I know all the problems in my classroom' than teachers of younger age groups.

By qualification X<sup>2</sup> showed a statistically significant difference in the claims 'I avoid conversations with the headmaster' (X<sup>2</sup> = 0.00), which means that teachers with lower qualifications are less willing to talk with the headmaster than their colleagues with higher education. The claim 'I am not always consistent in educational practices' X<sup>2</sup> = 0.024, teachers with university degrees are more accepted than teachers of high school education. 'The final decision resolving the problems in our school are decided by the headmaster.' and 'Teachers do not know how to fight for an appropriate status', X<sup>2</sup> = 0.00.

X<sup>2</sup> by sex showed statistically significant differences in claims in which respondents easily identify pupils' feelings of male respondents (X<sup>2</sup> = 0.027). Female examinees respect more children's desires and needs than men (X<sup>2</sup> = 0.40).

According to education - participation by respondents in the previously conducted action research X2 resulted in statistically significant differences in their responses in comparison with those who had no earlier involvement with the research.

#### **Analysis of variance (ANOVA)**

ANOVA results indicate statistically significant differences in attitudes between teachers involved in the action groups and those who were not involved, in all variables. Respondents strongly indicate the importance of leaders of organizations (headmaster), and not the expertise and competences of employees and their work. In other words, less confidence in the leader of the school results in less confidence in the entire school system and its operation.

#### **Discussion and Conclusion**

In the educational process, managers or persons who manage are located at all levels (pupils in classroom in the context of working with small groups, teachers, parents as partners, principals, counsellors, ministers). The effectiveness of the overall management structure is based on the effectiveness of individuals, teams, institutions, and the system. Leadership is one of the functional areas of management, based on the personal abilities of individuals, of which, for this work at managerial level, managerial skills, and managerial style are especially significant (Juric, 2004). The primary determinant of learning is teaching the teacher communication skills in order to acquire competence in leadership. Regardless of the objective(s), a person who wants to convey a message tries to make the message clear and logical so that the recipient could receive it. Technical problems are related to communication between employees and customers, parents and pupils which get in the way of successful motivation.

The extracted principal factors: relationships, autonomy, and external control describe success in relations as resulting from the willingness to adapt to unavoidable changes. The results and deviations of observed frequencies showed statistical differences between attitudes taking into account the work environment (schools) that are included in the study, chronological age, qualifications, work experience, gender, and participation in the previously conducted action research. ANOVA results indicate statistically significant differences in attitudes between teacher participants involved in the action research and those who were not included.

Hi – quadrate test showed statistically significant differences by gender, age and education. This was related to participation in a reflexive action research, and that learning communication skills in order to control the upbringing and education process is essential and is the underlying mechanism for overcoming institutional inertia and the factor that determines the pace and direction of development in the knowledge economy in education as part of lifelong learning.

The conclusion is that knowledge about leadership and management skills can be transferred beyond the classroom and integrated into authentic everyday activities that will be in a dyadic relationship between implementation and performance ‘in’ and ‘from’ the class team environment.

Knowledge and leadership skills can be the same for two similar educational organizations, but there remain differences that arise from their use in the environments in which they operate. Human resources are important, and the people, their skills, knowledge, abilities, uniqueness, and diversity within the educational system of the organization form a special identity that cannot be copied. Leadership is a process that affects other people, inspires, motivates, and directs their activities to meet the expectations of the group.

Long-term persuasion and continuity requires internalization of change - understanding that the new behaviour fits into a personal value system. The participants of this action research were people who had volunteered; which implies their desire for change. Effective management of the educational system increases the willingness of organizations to cope with challenges. The results of this study importantly emphasize teachers' attitudes where confidence in a leader is more important than the personal competence and the personal activities and work of teachers. In other words, the less confidence in the leader, the less confidence in the organization; this leaves only personal responsibility. Leadership always involves a person of influence, who chooses the way of personal control, to encourage others, but also the prevention of diversion into the unknown.

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